

REMARKS

Applicants hereby add new claims 76-83, and accordingly, claims 32-43 and 53-83 are pending in the present application.

Claims 71-75 stand rejected under 35 USC 103(a) for obviousness over Seiwa in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,645,701 to Ota et al.

Applicants respectfully traverse the rejections of the Office Action and request allowance of the pending claims.

Referring to the obviousness-type double patenting rejections, Applicant submits a terminal disclaimer herewith with respect to U.S. Patent No. 6,709,878. Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the double patenting rejections in view of the submitted terminal disclaimer.

Referring to the obviousness rejection over U.S. Patent No. 6,635,852 to Seiwa, Applicant respectfully submits that the Office has failed to present sufficient evidence that Seiwa qualifies as prior art. More specifically, the present application claims priority to February 27, 1998. The Seiwa reference was filed on June 12, 1998 after the priority date of Applicant's subject application.

In addition, Applicants submit herewith an abstract of the corresponding Japanese Seiwa application from which U.S. Patent No. 6,635,852 claims priority. The Abstract of the Japanese publication indicates an application number of JP19970155093 19970612 and publication number 11-003868 published in 1999. Applicant also has discovered a corresponding Canadian family member of the Seiwa reference having application number

CN19980102423 19980612, and publication number CN1202725 A published on December 23, 1998. The publication dates of both references are after the priority date of the subject application and therefore, the Office has failed to present adequate evidence that Seiwa qualifies as prior art. Applicants respectfully submit that the rejection of claims 71-75 over Seiwa is improper for at least the above-mentioned reasons. Applicants respectfully request allowance of claims 71-75 or the submission of evidence on the record by the Office that Seiwa qualifies as prior art.

Applicants hereby add new claims 76-83 which are supported at least by Fig. 1 and the associated specification teachings of the originally-filed application.

Applicants submit a supplemental IDS herewith. In addition, Applicants submit copies of previously filed IDSs and accompanying forms PTO-1449 which have not been initialed by the Examiner. Applicants respectfully request consideration of the references cited on the forms and return of the initialed forms to Applicants.

Applicants request allowance of all pending claims.

The Examiner is requested to phone the undersigned if the Examiner believes such would facilitate prosecution of the present application. The undersigned is available for telephone consultation at any time during normal business hours (Pacific Time Zone).

Appl. No. 10/773,383
Amtd. dated 6/9/2005
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Respectfully submitted,

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By: 
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